

ARTICLE X.

CRITICAL NOTES.

I.

ACTS XXVI. 28, IN THE LIGHT OF LATIN IDIOM.

THE influence of Latin on the Greek of New-Testament times is unquestioned. Not only single Latin words, as *κεντερίων*,¹ are found in the New Testament, but translated phrases, as *ἐργασίαν δοῦναι* (*operam dare*). The influence of Latin idiom would naturally be looked for in a report of the language of one brought up at Rome and speaking Greek in a Roman court. Such a report we have in these words, 'Ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι.² This is translated in the Revised Version: "With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." This is certainly ingenious, but is it not forced? Why cannot *Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι* mean "to act the part of a Christian"? The Latin *agere* furnishes numerous parallels in writers of the Silver Age. According to Tacitus, Piso says of Otho that his vices ruined the government, *etiam cum amicum imperatoris ageret*, "even when he was acting the part of a friend of the emperor." Hist. I. 30. Mucianus is said to be *socium magis imperii quam ministrum agens*, "acting as an ally rather than a servant of the government." Hist. 2. 83. Thrasea is said, *agere senatorem*, "to act the senator." Annals 16. 28. Quintilian says of Socrates, *Agens imperitum et admiratorem aliorum tanquam sapientium*, "acting the part of an ignoramus and an admirer of others as if they were wise." Inst. Or. 9. 2. 16. Also II. 3. 91. and 12. 8. 10. The following examples are found in the Letters of Pliny: *Sunt qui defunctorum quoque amicos agant*, "act the part of friends." I. 17.1 *Amissoque filio matrem adhuc agere*, "though the son was lost still to play the mother. III. 16. 6. *Patremfamiliae hactenus ago*, "I play the householder." IX. 15. 3. Pliny's Panegyric has these two: *Tunc maxime imperator quum amicum ex imperatore agis*. 85. 6. *Quum agere tam bonum consulem posses*. 56. 3. A tragedy of Seneca, a contemporary of Paul, has the following line (Clytaemnestra to Electra): *Sed agere domita feminam disces malo*, "Tamed by misfortune, thou shalt learn to play the woman." Agam. v. 3. 7. Suetonius has several examples: *Non principem sed ministrum egit*. Claud. 29. Also Tiber. 12. 26. Valerius Maximus, writing in the reign of Tiberius, gives us at least twelve instances of this usage. Speaking of the first Brutus, and of the execution of his sons,

¹ For other words see Thayer's Lexicon, p. 693.

² Text of the Revisers, as also of Tischendorf, and of Westcott and Hort.

he says, *Exiit patrem ut consulem ageret.* v. 8. 1. Of the famous Scaevola and his recreations he says, *Ut enim in rebus seriis Scaevolam, ita et in [scenicis] lusibus hominem agebat.* VIII. 8. 2. In the same way *agere* is used with *amicum* IV. 2. 5., *consulem* II. 2. 4., III. 8. 3., 12. 2. 2., *fenerat icem* VIII. 2. 2., *virum, imperatorem* VII. 2. 5., *maritum, patrem* IX. 13. 4., *praetorem*, VII. 7. 7., *custodem* VI. 1. 4., *reum, accusatorem* IV. 2. 6., *civem* VIII. 6. 2. Vellius Paterculus, also in the time of Tiberius, has *agebat aemulum*, Maroboduus "was playing the rival," II. 109. 1. He says of Tiberius that he was striving *ut potius aequalem civem quam eminentem liceret agere principem* II. 124. 2. Also II. 92. 2. The fact that these examples are from the later Latin will not detract from their value. The distinction between *agere* and *facere* is not important in the idiom. We may add a single example of *facere* from Plautus, *Ferocem facis*, "you put on a bold face, *litii* do the bold man." Most. iv. i. 32 (44).

If this idiom be disallowed, it is still possible to derive a similar meaning by taking *Χριστιανόν* as neuter, though we should expect the plural, as in Herodotus v. 40. *ποιέων οὐδαμῶς Σπαρτηρικὰ*. In either case, the unusual meaning of *ποιῆσαι* may possibly explain the early change of the text to *γενέσθαι* (from Paul's answer), from which comes our received rendering, "thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Unless *Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι* be taken to mean "to act the Christian," we seem to be driven to a very awkward connection of *ποιῆσαι* with *πειθεῖς*.

This usage would receive support, independently of the Latin, from one passage in the Septuagint, if the text were undisputed. In I Kings (3 Reg.) xx. (xxi.) 7: Jezebel says to Ahab, *Σὺ νῦν οὕτω ποιεῖς βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ Ἰσραὴλ;* "Art thou thus acting the king over Israel?" But a variant for *βασιλεὺς* is *βασιλείαν*, which indeed our Hebrew text would require; and Trommius' Concordance has *βασιλείς*.

Is there not also a Latin idiom in *ἐν ὀλίγῳ*? Roby (Gr. §§ 1975, 1976) gives numerous examples from Livy of *in* with the ablative, forming phrases equivalent to adjectives and adverbs; as *in propinquo*, *in promiscuo*, *in facili*, *in difficili*, etc. There may be no literary examples of *in parvo*, or *in paulo*, but we have *in angusto* (= *angustus*, Celsus, De Med. 8. 4, twice.) and Tacitus, speaking of the dreary monotony of cruelty in his history, says "Nobis *in arto* et inglorius labor." Ann. 4. 32. 3. So we have in our day the traditional phrases *in toto*, *in extenso*. It can hardly be claimed that *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* is a borrowed phrase, but it may possibly have an adverbial force, determined by Latin idiom. It would then be not the same as *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* in Eph. iii. 3, but like *ὀλίγως* in 2 Peter 2. 18—*τοῖς ὀλίγως ἀποφεύγοντας*, "those that are escaping a little. Then the whole passage would read, somewhat literally: "Agrippa said unto Paul, A little thou art persuading me to act the Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that both a little and a great deal, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds."

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2.

ASSYRIAN MONTHS.

The influence of a people may be measured by the degree in which their language affects the nomenclature of surrounding nations. Thus the Romans reveal the far reaching influence they exerted on the world in the extent to which their names of the months affected the nomenclature of Europe. Not Italy alone, but France and Germany, Austria and Switzerland, England and Holland, Denmark and Scandinavia, Spain and Portugal, to say nothing of smaller nations further east, adopted more or less entirely their names of the twelve months. It is an interesting enquiry, How far was the influence of Assyria manifested in the same way over surrounding nations?

Previous to the captivity, the Jews generally referred to the months by their number though they had other names for some of them at least. Thus the first month was also known as Abib, or rather *The* Abib, for it was written with the article. Ex. XIII. 4 et al. The name signified an ear of corn. The second month was also called Zif or Ziv, month of beauty or of flowers. 1 Kings, vi. 1, 37. In the next verse the eighth month is also called Bul,¹ rain, probably because the autumnal rains began about that time. The seventh month was known also as Ethanim, (gifts?) or rather *The* Ethanim with the article. 1 Kings, viii. 2.

In the later years of the kingdom of Judah this was all changed. The Assyrian names of the months were adopted by the Jews as we see in Nehemiah, Esther, Zachariah and Ezekiel. This was the result of the social and political supremacy of Assyria, though literary preeminence belonged more to Babylonia, which however as a part of the empire went to aggrandize the ruling power. Indeed Assyria seems to have had names of her own for the months, which gave place to Babylonian names just as the old Hebrew names did. Were there also Aramaic names superseded in like manner?

Thus Assyria transmitted the literary influence of Babylonia as Rome also carried with her in her conquests the literary supremacy of Greece.

The Assyrian names of the months are ideograms with an Akkadian basis. Each month contained thirty days and once in six years an intercalary month of the same length was added to conform to the solar year.

The Assyrian names occur in "The Inscription of Western Asia," iv. 33, foot of col. 1, also in vol. v. 29. 1., and more fully on p. 43. Also in George Smith's Assurbanipal, pages 325 and 326. This list he composed from several unpublished tablets in the British museum. Translations or rather transliterations of these names may be found in "Records of the Past," i. 166 and 167, also vii. 169 and 170.

Though only seven of the Assyrian months are referred to in Scripture, the probability is that all were used in the intercourse of daily life. The other five are mentioned in the Talmud, but there was no occasion for mentioning more than seven of them in the sacred writings. The names mentioned with the places where they occur are as follows: Nisan, Esther iii.

¹ This month is mentioned in the Phoenician inscription of King Ishmanezzer discovered at Sidon. "The Land and the Book," II. 644.

7, Neh. ii. 1; Sivan, Esther viii. 9; Elul, Neh. vi. 15; Kislev, Neh. i. 1, Zech. vii. 1; Tebet, Esther ii. 16; Shebat, Zech. i. 7, and Adar, Ezra vi. 15 and Esther iii. 7. The name Tammuz appears in Ezek. viii. 14, but only as the name of a person.

The Assyrian months overlap ours a little, e. g., Nisan, though mostly in our April, extends a little into May, and so on through the rest.

The following table shows that the Babylonian or Assyrian gave form to the Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic names, thus indicating the extensiveness of its influence. Mohammedanism sought to substitute a calendar of its own, but it never succeeded in displacing the Assyrian, which holds its own throughout the Turkish empire to this day. The Mohammedan months are lunar, and retrograde back to the starting point in thirty-three and one-half years. Their names are Mokharram, Sufar, Rabeca el Owwal, Rabeca et taneh, Joomad el Owwal, Joomad et taneh, Rejeb. Shaaban, Ramadan, Showwal, Zuel Qadeh, Zu el Khejjeh.

ENGLISH.	ASSYRIAN.	ARABIC.	ARAMAIC.	HEBREW.	ASSYRIAN.
April	Nisannu	Nisan	Nisan	ניסן	Anu and Bib
May	Airu	Iyyar	Iyar	אייר	Ia
June	Sivanu	Khaziran	Khaziran	סיון	Sin (Moon)
July	Duzu	Tamûz	Tamûz	תמוז	Adar (Ninip)
August	Abu	Ab	Ab	אב	Allat (Queen of Hades)
September	Ululu	Ailûl	Ailûla	אלול	Ishtar (Aphrodite)
October	Tasritu	Teshrin el Awal	Teshri el maya	תשרי	Shamash (Sun)
November	AnakhSamnu	Teshrin eth Thaneh	Teshri akh- raya	כסלו	Merodach
December	Kisliwu	Kanûn el Awal	Kanûn gad- maya	כסלו	Nergal
January	Tarbitu	Karum eth Thaneh	Kanûn akh- raya	שבט	Papsukul
February	Shabahu	Subat or Shubat	Shibat	שבט	Rammanu (Air)
March	Addaru	Adar	Adar	אדר	The Seven Great Gods
April	Arakh Makru			אדר	Asshur